

Representative **DUNCAN HUNTER**

52D DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

MEMBER, NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PROCUREMENT



NEWS

366 SOUTH PIERCE ST.
EL CAJON, CA 92020
(619) 579-3001

1101 AIRPORT RD., SUITE G
IMPERIAL, CA 92251
(619) 353-5420

1410 MAIN ST., SUITE C
RAMONA, CA 92065
(619) 788-3630

2265 RAYBURN BLDG
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5672

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CONTACT: Maureen Cragin

Ryan Vaart

(202) 225-2539

Statement of the Honorable Duncan Hunter Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Procurement

Army Modernization Hearing

March 11, 1997

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last week General Dennis Reimer, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, stated that continued delay of the Army's modernization would have a major impact on its readiness. He highlighted in his posture statement before our full committee that, "We are providing adequately for the soldiers of 1997, but we have serious concerns about the equipment our soldiers will have as we cross the threshold in the 21st century...Further deferral of modernization will incur significant risk to future readiness."

I am not sure if we are even providing for our soldiers in 1997, however, I wholeheartedly agree with the Chief of Staff's remarks regarding future modernization. I would like to add that, although the Army's FY 98 Procurement Budget request is \$430 million higher than the FY 97 request, this figure is \$1.2 billion less than Congress appropriated in FY 97. It appears to me that the modernization shortfall continues to be pushed out to the future.

General Reimer's statement and the intelligence briefs our subcommittees received in February give me great cause for concern. The lack of modernization funds that have been requested in the Administration's FY 98 defense budget request for not only the Army, but for all of the services will be inadequate to meet the future needs of the Nation.

We have an obligation to our military personnel and the American public to provide for and fund the most advanced weapon systems available. Although we must succeed at balancing the federal budget, we must not use defense weapons modernization as a "bill payer". This action will undoubtedly place the men and women of the U.S. military at a disadvantage to potential adversaries as a result of outdated and less capable weapon systems.

There is serious pressure being placed upon the Army from a modernization stand point for the future. Continuing to delay the Army's procurement needs beyond the year 2000 will no doubt make the U.S. more vulnerable to threat systems that are being developed in and marketed by Russia, China, and third world countries. Many of these systems and state-of-the-art technologies are available for purchase "as is" from Russia and China as well as other countries - or they can easily be altered for further development into advanced weapons. I would like to hear from our witnesses today about their outlook for the Army's modernization requirements and where they can be enhanced.